

REMARKS

The Applicant has filed the present Amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, in reply to the outstanding Official Action of September 3, 2004. The Applicant believes this Amendment to be fully responsive to the Official Action for the reasons set forth below.

In the present Official Action, the Examiner objected to Claims 1-3 and 12 because of the informalities identified on page 2 of the Official Action. The Examiner rejected Claims 1-9 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over Pell, *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,055,692) (hereinafter "Pell") in view of Harder (U.S. Patent No. 4,553,720). The Examiner further rejected Claims 1, 6, 10-12 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over R. L. Campbell (U.S. Patent No. 2,470,337) (hereinafter "Campbell") in view of Gary (U.S. Patent No. 5,105,915).

At the outset and before addressing the rejections raised in the Official Action, the Applicant has amended the specification as recited herein to provide editorial corrections and to clarify that commuter aircraft are generally provided with their own stairways as recited in the Applicant's cited earlier U.S. Pat. No. 5,603,343 at Col. 1, lines 18-12. The Applicant has further amended Claims 1, 3, 6-7 and 10-12. The Applicant has amended Claim 1 to more clearly recite the boarding ramp in accordance with the present invention. More specifically, the boarding ramp comprises a corridor unit provided with a gangway that is pivotally attached at the rear end of the corridor unit and raisable at the forward end of the corridor, wherein the gangway is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle to the door sill of the

aircraft, as more particularly recited in Claim 1. Support for this amendment is found in the original specification on page 2, lines 29-30 and 12-15; page 6, lines 18-23; and Figs 1, 2 and 9. Furthermore, the Applicant has amended Claims 2-3, 6-7 and 10-12 to provide editorial revisions, to comply with the claim objections addressed below, and to make the subject matter of the dependent claims correspond to subject matter of the amended independent Claim 1. Lastly, the Applicant has added new Claim 13, with support for the claim found in the original specification on page 2, lines 14-17. The Applicant respectfully submits that no new subject matter has been entered via the foregoing amendments.

In traversing the objection to Claims 1-3 and 12, the Applicant has amended Claims 1, 3 and 10 to correct the identified informalities and provide appropriate antecedent basis. More specifically, the Applicant has provided an antecedent for the term "vehicle" and consequently believes that the preamble now reads correctly without the comma suggested by the Examiner. The Applicant has amended Claim 3 as suggested by the Examiner. Lastly, the Applicant has amended the dependency of Claim 10 to make it depend from Claim 8; therefore, Claim 12 indirectly depends from Claim 8, which provides the antecedent basis for the term "horizontal plate."

Consequently, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to Claims 1-3 and 12.

In traversing the rejection of Claims 1-9 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over the Pell-Harder combination, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Pell-Harder combination is defective in that it fails to teach or suggest a corridor unit provided with a gangway that is pivotally attached at the rear end of the corridor unit and raisable at the forward end of the corridor, wherein the gangway is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle (ground exit) to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the independent Claim 1. The claimed invention provides a boarding ramp for the movement of passengers between the ground exit of an airport terminal or a vehicle and the door sill of the aircraft, which are at different height. The primary prior art reference to Pell is directed to a telescopic boarding bridge mounted at ground level for bridging the gap between a small aircraft and a terminal gate doorway. As correctly acknowledged by the Examiner, Pell does not teach or suggest the selectively inclinable gangway from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the now amended Claim 1. More specifically, Pell provides for weather protection and passenger containment only, but it does not provide a boarding ramp between the ground exit of the terminal or the vehicle and the door sill of the aircraft, which is at a different height from the ground exit. However, the Examiner alleged that the secondary prior art reference to Harder teaches the selectively inclinable gangway (8/9).

To the contrary of the Examiner's allegation, the secondary prior art reference to Harder does not rectify the deficiency identified by the Examiner in Pell. More specifically, Harder teaches a connecting mechanism (i.e., cabin 4) for an airplane

passenger bridge 3. Furthermore, Harder teaches that the passenger bridge 3 and the cabin 4 connect the airport terminal 1 to the aircraft 2. First, the Applicant respectfully submit that Harder is not directed to ground level bridges, but instead Harder is directed to jetways linking airport terminals that are generally at a "second-level" height off the ground, i.e., not ground level. The second-level height is approximately 12 to 15 feet off the ground. Second, Harder's cabin 4 has a bottom comprising two different sections; an inner section 9 that is rigid, and an outer section 8 that is movable (See Harder, Col. 2, lines 4-12 in view Fig. 3). The inner section 9 of the bottom is rigid; thus the bottom of the cabin is not pivotally attached at the rear end of the cabin. In addition, because only the outer section 8 of the bottom is movable, Harder's cabin assures only that the passenger bridge completely seals off any gaps between the threshold of the airplane door and the bottom of the cabin (See Harder, Col. 1, lines 41-45; and Col. 3, lines 6-10). However, unlike the claimed invention, the bottom of Harder's cabin does not have the ability to incline from the ground level to the door sill of the aircraft. More specifically, Harder provides for the sealing-off described above, but it does not provide a boarding ramp between the ground exit of the terminal or the vehicle and the door sill of the aircraft, which is at a different height from the ground exit. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Pell-Harder bridge does not teach or suggest a corridor unit (Harder's cabin) provided with a gangway (Harder's bottom including sections 8 and 9) that is pivotally attached at the rear end of the corridor unit and raisable at the forward end of the corridor, wherein the gangway is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle (ground exit) to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the independent Claim 1.

Consequently, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 1 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Furthermore, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 2-9 based at least on their respective dependencies, whether direct or indirect, from the independent Claim 1.

In traversing the rejection of Claims 1, 6 and 10-12 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over the Campbell-Gary combination, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Campbell-Gary combination is defective in that it fails to teach or suggest a corridor unit provided with a gangway that is pivotally attached at the rear end of the corridor unit and raisable at the forward end of the corridor, wherein the gangway is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle (ground exit) to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the independent Claim 1. The primary prior art reference to Campbell is directed only to an extensible canopy for affording persons weather protection and containment for passing to or from a plane. As correctly acknowledged by the Examiner, Campbell does not teach or suggest the selectively inclinable gangway from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the now amended Claim 1.

Campbell provides no gangway at all. In fact, Campbell provides a staircase 4 for the passengers to climb to the door sill of the plane. More specifically, as mentioned above, Campbell provides a canopy for weather protection and passenger containment only, but it does not provide a boarding ramp between the ground exit of the terminal or the vehicle

and the door sill of the aircraft, which is at a different height from the ground exit.

However, the Examiner alleged that the secondary prior art reference to Gary teaches the selectively inclinable gangway (10) comprising panels 20, 30, 34.

To the contrary of the Examiner's allegation, the secondary prior art reference to Gary does not rectify the deficiency identified by the Examiner in Campbell. More specifically, Gary teaches a wheelchair lift that consists of a horizontal platform 20 mounted on a hydraulic elevator operable by the wheelchair occupant (See Gary, Abstract in view of Fig. 1). Gary further teaches back panel 30 and front panel 34. The back panel 30 is fastened through multiple hinges 24 and can swing open to rest on the ground when the platform 20 is lowered all the way, thus providing a ramp for a wheelchair to be either pushed or wheeled onto the platform 20 (See Gary Col 4, lines 14-19 in view of Fig. 2). To the contrary of the Examiner's allegation, the front panel 34 is attached to rails 32, so it cannot move and thus it cannot be considered part of a gangway (See Gary Col 4, lines 12-13 in view of Fig. 2). The Applicant respectfully submits that Gary's wheelchair lift teaches away from the selectively inclinable gangway, as particularly recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Gary's platform 20 is horizontal and not pivotally attached so that the platform is not and cannot be selectively inclinable, as particularly recited in the present Claim 1. Further, if back panel 30 is considered part of the platform 20, as the Examiner has apparently done here, the arguably combined platform (platform 20 and back panel 30) is not pivotally attached, as the gangway recited in present Claim 1. As mentioned above, the platform is horizontal and the back panel 30 is attached at edge 26 to platform 20 to swing down to the floor, therefore the

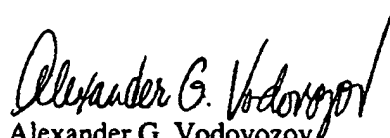
combined platform is not selectively inclinable. That is, the back panel is not pivotally attached at the other edge (i.e., opposite of edge 26). Therefore, Gary's combined platform is not and cannot serve as the gangway recited in the present Claim 1.

Furthermore, the Examiner has not shown any motivation to combine the references, or how the foregoing prior art references would be operable together to provide a gangway, as particularly recited Claim 1. The Applicant respectfully submits that the Campbell-Gary combination is not operable to provide a gangway that is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle (ground exit) to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the independent Claim 1. It is reiterated that the present boarding ramp provides a gangway for the movement of passengers between the ground level and the door sill of the aircraft. At most what can be said about the Campbell-Gary combination is that Gary's combined platform (20, 30) may arguably act as a lift after a passenger climbs Campbell's staircase 4. Thus, every passenger would have to climb Campbell's staircase and operate Gary's hydraulic elevator to reach the door sill of the plane (See Gary, Abstract in view of Fig. 1). This is dangerous and untenable in today's airports, in terms of the safety, security and existing regulations. Therefore, the arguable Campbell-Gary combination does not teach or suggest, and is cannot be operable as, a corridor unit provided with gangway that is pivotally attached at the rear end of the corridor unit and raisable at the forward end of the corridor, wherein the gangway is selectively inclinable from the ground level of the terminal or the vehicle (ground exit) to the door sill of the aircraft, as particularly recited in the independent Claim 1.

Consequently, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claim 1 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Furthermore, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 6 and 10-12 based at least on their respective dependencies, whether direct or indirect, from the independent Claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant believes this application is in condition for allowance and the Applicant henceforth respectfully solicits such allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference might expedite the allowance of this application, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to call the undersigned, Applicant's attorney, at the following telephone number (516) 746-8000.

Respectfully submitted,



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